

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSLO 00105 080722Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0105

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NCR
SUBJ: SOVIETS PROTEST NORWEGIAN SVALBARD FISHERIES PRESERVATION
ZONE

1. MFA POLITICAL DIRECTOR VIBE INFORMED DCM JANUARY 5 THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE PROTESTED TO THE GON ABOUT ITS PLANS TO ESTABLISH A FISHERIES PRESERVATION ZONE (FPZ) AROUND SVALBARD. ACCORDING TO VIBE, THE SOVIETS WERE BRIEFED ON THE NORWEGIANS' GENERAL PLANS FOR AN FPZ SHORTLY BEFORE CHRISTMAS. ON JANUARY 3 SOVIET AMBASSADOR KKIRICHENKO READ TO FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND WHAT HE CALLED "AN ORAL DECLARATION" ABOUT THE FPZ.

2. READING FROM HIS REPORT OF THE JANUARY 3 MEETING, VIBE SUMMARIZED THE SOVIET DECLARATION AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT REFERRED TO THE INFORMATION THAT THE GON WAS WORKING ON A FPZ . IN DOING SO ON A UNILATERAL BASIS, THE NORWEGIANSIDE WAS NOT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SPECIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OSLO 00105 080722Z

STATUS OF THIS AREA;

B. THE SOVIET SIDE WISHES TO DRAW THE GON'S ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE PLANNED MEASURES WOULD TOUCH ON RIGHTS WHICH THE SOVIET UNION HAS IN THE AREA AND WHERE THE SOVIET UNION HAS TRADITIONALLY FISHED;

C. THE LIVING RESOURCES OF THIS AREA CONSTITUTE A SINGLE ECOLOGICAL COMPLEX WITH THE LIVING RESOURCES IN THE AREA OFF THE SOVIET COAST AND ANY REGULATION OF THE FISHERIES AROUND SVALBARD WOULD HAVE TO TAKE THIS FACT INTO ACCOUNT;

D. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT THE NORWEGIAN SIDE WILL PAY ATTENTION TO THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS AND TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. VIBE STATED THAT THE NORWEGIANS INITIAL READING OF THE SOVIET DECLARATION WAS THAT IT REPRESENTED A "FAIRLY MILD REACTION" TO THE GON'S PLANS. HE BELIEVES THAT THE RUSSIAN REACTION WAS PROBABLY SOMEWHAT SOFTENED BY THE GON'S DECISION TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO BRIEF THE SOVIETS ON THEIR PLANS. NO FINAL ANALYSIS HAS YET BEEN MADE, HOWEVER, AND NO DECISION AS TO HOW TO REACT, IF AT ALL, TO THE SOVIET DEMANDS.

4. DCM NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER, IN A YEAR-END INTERVIEW WITH THE NORWEGIAN PRESS BUREAU ((NPB), HAD SAID THAT THE GON WANTED TO GAIN EXPERIENCE WITH THE MAINLAND ECONOMIC ZONE BEFORE ESTABLISHING THE FPZ. DCM OBSERVED THAT FRYDENLUND'S STATEMENT APPEARED TO REPRESENT A REVERSION BY THE GON TO ITS PREVIOUS "GO-SLOW" APPROACH TO THE FPZ. WHICH HAD BEEN OUTLINED BY NORWEGIANS TO US-SIDE IN OCTOBER BUT SOMEWHAT CHANGED BY LATER PUBLIC NORWEGIAN STATEMENTS (OSLO 5991). DCM ASKED WHAT WAS ACTUAL STATE OF GON THINKING ON TIMING OF FPZ INTRODUCTION.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 OSLO 00105 080722Z

5. VIBE CONFIRMED THAT FRYDENLUND'S STATEMENT DID REPRESENT A CHANGE BACK TO PREVIOUS MORE CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO ZONE'S INTRODUCTION. HE SAID CABINET HAD HAD ONE SESSION DISCUSSING ELIASSEN-COMMITTEE REPORT ON FPZ, BUT WOULD CONSIDER IT FURTHER. HE HAD NO ESTIMATE ON WHEN IT MIGHT BE REPORTED OUT OF THE CABINET. (IN A LATER CONVERSATION, MFA LEGAL ADVISER ELIASSEN TOLD ECON COUNSELOR THAT IT MIGHT BE ANOTHER MONTH BEFORE THAT HAPPENED).

6. COMMENT: THE SOVIETS APPEARED TO HAVE THROWN UP THREE SEPARATE OBJECTIONS TO THE FPZ: (1) THAT IT MAY IMPACT ON TREATY PARTIES RIGHTS IN THE AREA: (2) THAT IT MAY AFFECT TRADITIONAL SOVIET FISHING THERE; (3) THAT IT WILL AFFECT THE FISH ECOLOGY OF THE BARENTS SEA, IN WHICH THE SOVIETS CLAIM A SPECIAL INTEREST. ACCORDING TO WHAT WE KNOW OF THE CURRENT NORWEGIAN PLANS FOR THE FPZ, THE GON SHOULD BE ABLE TO SATISFACTORILY DEAL WITH ALL THREE SOVIET CONSIDERATIONS IN THE ZONE'S IMPLEMENTATION--THAT IS IF THE SOVIETS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO

THE ISSUES, ESPECIALLY ON THE QUESTION OF THE FPZ'S RELATIONSHIP
TO THEIR TREATY RIGHTS.
ANDERS

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